

11

CHAPTER

AREA PLANS

CONCEPTS

The character of development throughout the Meadowlands District is a composite of the types, locations, intensities, and design of its constituent land uses. Current land use patterns are functions of development that took place prior to the NJMC and its original Master Plan, the subsequent years of implementing the Plan, and various legislative mandates. A map of locations for desired types of development, included as Map 15, presents a major strategy in achieving the Master Plan's vision for the District. It provides the blueprint that guides the District's form.

Traditionally, both master plans and local zoning have sought to separate commercial and industrial development from residential areas. There has also been a widespread belief that single-family detached dwellings should be protected from the intrusion of other housing types. Both notions were challenged by the decline of heavy industry and the growth of modern technology in the 1970's. These trends fostered the planning concept that certain types of land uses could be compatible, particularly residences, offices, and small retail establishments, marking the beginning of mixed use zones.

More recently, the smart growth and sustainable development initiatives have given further impetus to the mixed use concept. As discussed in Chapter 1, smart growth reflects concerns about sprawl, environmental degradation, and fiscal constraints. Sustainability requires the economy, society, and the environment to function harmoniously, meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. Within the Meadowlands District, the sustainability and smart growth initiatives must be undertaken within the context of these competing factors:

- The wetlands and open areas of the Meadowlands are critical to the environmental protection and enhancement of the Hackensack River system. Most suitable upland properties have already been developed.
- The District's historic development of warehouses and light industrial uses, its proximity to New York City and Port Newark and the Elizabeth Port Authority Marine Terminal, and the extensive regional system of roadways and railways suggest a continuing demand for distribution/warehouse facilities and transportation improvements.

The District's original Comprehensive Land Use Plan consisted of a map and a rendering developed to balance certain competing interests. According to the accompanying narrative, "The pivotal part of the plan is a central, six square mile regional breathing space, recrea-

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tional water park and marsh conservation-wildlife preserve running the length of the District.” The original plan incorporated certain aspects of smart growth and sustainable development well before those concepts had been defined and popularized. Although the plan drew upon traditional land use principles to bring order to the District, it also introduced innovative concepts and design for a Meadowlands of the future. The plan did not, however, concentrate on redevelopment or the remediation of industrial properties.

The new Land Use Plan continues to promote the overall vision of the original plan, modifying certain aspects in light of changed conditions, current attitudes, and subsequent legal mandates. It incorporates the following policy considerations, consistent with those regarding Systems Plans in Chapter 10, as well as the Plan Features described in Chapter 1:

- The District’s remaining wetlands will be preserved as open space. There is now a greater understanding of the critical roles of wetlands as wildlife habitat and the overall quality of the Hackensack River system than existed at the time of the original Comprehensive Plan. Once viewed as non-productive, wetlands are now recognized as important in the hemispherical context as part of the North American Flyway for migratory birds and for the richness of the wetland environment as a host for a variety of wildlife.
- Redevelopment of landfill sites will provide not only the closure of landfill operations, but also much needed recreation, open space, and habitat enhancement areas. Landfill sites in Rutherford, Lyndhurst, North Arlington, and Kearny will be designated as “Resort Recreation Community” areas, consistent with the adopted redevelopment plan for these areas.
- The expansion of the warehouse/distribution sector in the District is highly desirable, particularly when considering the regional growth in port-related and intermodal freight business. The many freight railroads that traverse the District induce demand for additional intermodal facilities and freight related businesses.
- The influence of the Frank R. Lautenberg Station at Secaucus Junction will be directed to the entire south Secaucus area for purposes of economic development and to the entire District in terms of transportation services.
- The evolution of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority area continues to play a vital role in this plan. The NJSEA’s consideration of redeveloping the Meadowlands Sports Complex to include a mix of commercial uses dramatically influences land use decisions regarding adjacent areas.

DESCRIPTIONS AND POLICIES

The Land Use Plan, included as Map 15, divides the District into twenty planning areas, including three Preserve areas and five Village areas. Each planning area has its own unique character. A summary of the planning areas and their sizes is included as Figure 11.1. Narrative descriptions appear on the following pages.

FIGURE 11.1 Planning Areas in the Meadowlands District		
PLANNING AREAS	ACRES	PERCENT
Airport	681.9	3.5%
Secaucus Transit Center	137.3	0.7%
Commercial Corridor	398.1	2.0%
Employment Center	2550.9	13.1%
Logistics/Intermodal/Industrial	2528.6	13.0%
Paterson Plank Corridor	199.6	1.0%
Preserve: Berry's Creek, Hackensack River, & Penhorn	7128.7	36.6%
Resort Recreation Community	1255.6	6.4%
Sports and Entertainment	583.3	3.0%
Transportation	2865.8	14.7%
Utility	54.3	0.3%
Village: Little Ferry, Lyndhurst, Moonachie, Secaucus, & Teterboro	396.2	2.0%
Warehouse Outlet Center	542.3	2.8%
Waterfront Development	162.8	0.8%
TOTAL ACRES	19485.4	100.0%
<i>Note: Total acres are approximate due to rounding.</i>		

The planning areas do not constitute zoning districts. Instead, the descriptions of the planning areas provide the impetus for the development of a new zone plan and regulations. The zone plan and regulations will reflect the spirit and intent of the adopted Master Plan and will be the mechanism by which the policies and principles of the Master Plan are implemented and enforced. Proposed development will be evaluated in accordance with smart growth principles.

Preserve: Hackensack River, Berry's Creek, and Penhorn

The Hackensack River system is recognized as a defining attribute of the Meadowlands District in the designation of the Hackensack River Preserve and two tributary preserve areas, the Berry's Creek Preserve and the Penhorn Preserve. This designation includes most of the exist-

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ing wetland areas in the District. Some uplands are also included, particularly along the Hackensack River where they are important for recreation or open space protection. The Preserve areas will protect wetlands remaining in the District, with the intent of full public ownership. To meet this objective, the NJMC will seek to acquire approximately 2,600 acres of wetlands. An additional 600 acres are anticipated to be donated to the State of New Jersey. These areas will not be consumed by sprawl development.

Preserves permit uses that are consistent with the preservation of open space and habitat protection and enhancement. Wildlife management areas are encouraged. The plan promotes the formulation of a habitat enhancement program for the preserve areas, as well as edge parks and waterfront park areas for the public. Wetland restoration and/or mitigation is provided in connection with programs and regulations of other State and Federal agencies.

The Preserve areas consist of all undeveloped land adjacent to the Hackensack River. This includes most of the land between the western spur of the New Jersey Turnpike and the Hackensack River, the undeveloped land on the east side of the River to the north of the developed portions of Secaucus, the Saw Mill Creek Wildlife Management Area, and Kearny Marsh.

Major tributaries associated with the Hackensack River Preserve are located on both sides of the river and include the Losen Slote, Moonachie Creek, Saw Mill Creek, Anderson Creek, Mill Creek and Bellmans Creek.

The Penhorn Creek Preserve includes the headwater areas north of Secaucus Road in North Bergen and the area surrounding the Malanka Landfill and the Public Service Electric and Gas facilities in Secaucus and Jersey City, respectively.

The Berry's Creek Preserve includes the areas along both the Creek itself and Berry's Creek Canal in Rutherford and East Rutherford. Further upstream, it includes the Berry's Creek Tidal Marsh on the New Jersey Sports and Exposition Authority property and the wetland areas in Carlstadt at the confluence of the East and West Riser Ditches and Peach Island Creek. Its designation as part of Berry's Creek Preserve will allow the Berry's Creek Tidal Marsh to be used for open space in conjunction with other development on the Sports Complex site.

Resort Recreation Community

This designation is associated with the existing landfill areas in Rutherford, Lyndhurst, North Arlington and Kearny. The landfill areas include the Viola, the Avon, the Rutherford, the Lyndhurst, the Erie, I-E, and the Kingsland landfills.

The purposes of the Resort Recreation Community are to convert landfills and adjacent areas to recreation uses, establish upland and wetland habitat areas, properly close the landfills using techniques that are proven to protect the environment, and provide for economic development in concert with the recreation uses. Golf courses will be constructed on top of the closure materials. A total of four courses are planned together with ancillary facilities such as a practice range and a clubhouse. A conference center, offices and residential development are also pro-

posed within the Resort Recreation Community area. The residential development will offer overlooks of the golf courses and the wetland environment.

Together, the Resort Recreation Community and the Hackensack River Preserve will establish a substantial open space area west of the Hackensack River. The area will include passive and active recreational facilities and provide for both upland and wetland habitat protection areas in an expansive system of streams and elevation changes. It will enrich the Meadowlands as a destination for resort recreation opportunities.

Secaucus Transit Center

Secaucus Transit Center is a planned mixed-use development. The Frank R. Lautenberg Station at Secaucus Junction, the most significant transportation improvement in the northeastern United States in the past decade, is located at the center. Secaucus Junction connects every major rail commuter line in northeast New Jersey and allows transfers to various destinations in the region. Operated by NJ Transit, Secaucus Junction provides direct, interrelated train operations among NJ Transit's Bergen and Main Line, Amtrak, and the Northeast Corridor Line. The Northeast Corridor carries trains from the Raritan Valley Line, the Montclair Branch, the Boonton Line, and the Jersey Shore Line via the Newark Penn Station. Officially opened in September 2003, Secaucus Junction is establishing itself as a transit hub.

Consistent with smart growth principles, the station is the focal point of a major development node that offers potential as a "transit village." Permitted uses immediately above and adjacent to Secaucus Junction may include retail, office, hotel, parks, and residential development.

Commercial space in conjunction with Secaucus Junction will accommodate the needs of the local employee base and residents. Concourse space is available within Secaucus Junction itself. Retail including business services may be established within proximity of the residential development.

Office space is planned for the area above and adjacent to the station. The office space establishes a unique commitment to the economic development of the area and is one of the most significant public-private partnership arrangements ever to take place in this region. Mass transit will be the preferred transportation mode for persons accessing the office buildings, including approximately 60 percent of the office employees.

Active and passive recreational facilities will have connections to the water, residences, and offices. The transit village will be a walkable neighborhood. Wetlands along the Hackensack River and Penhorn Creek will remain as natural open space. The Secaucus Greenway would be the focal point for open space. The Greenway should be interconnected to future waterfront open space areas north of the County Park.



FIGURE 11.3 *The NJMC's administrative offices and Environment Center at Richard W. DeKorte Park in Lyndhurst present an effective interface of development with the waterfront. DeKorte Park balances the public's desires for access, education, and recreation with environmental protection and restoration.*



FIGURE 11.4 *The Plaza at the Meadows and the adjacent office complexes in Secaucus provide a relatively compact mix of retail, office, and public uses. Compared to sprawl development, this development strategy is a more efficient use of land and other resources.*

Sports and Entertainment

Giants Stadium, Continental Airlines Arena, and the Meadowlands Racetrack have immediate recognition in the world of sports and entertainment. The events held in the Sports Complex are highly attended, each bringing thousands of people into the Meadowlands area. From a land use perspective, the Sports Complex and its facilities are a focal point of Meadowlands development. The facilities are located at the center of the District, visible from various viewpoints in and around its environs.

The NJMC Master Plan recognizes the Sports Complex as a Sports and Entertainment District subject to the Sports Authority's plans for development of the site. The Berry's Creek Tidal Marsh is designated as part of Berry's Creek Preserve, reflecting the intent to preserve as much of the District's remaining wetlands as possible. The NJMC does not, however, have jurisdiction to regulate development on the Sports Complex site. Special legislation creating the Sports Authority conferred the entity with powers to plan and develop its properties based on its own criteria, not the Commission's Master Plan and zoning regulations. Nevertheless, the NJMC recognizes the parallel planning for the Sports Complex site and the need to coordinate its planning outcomes with those of this Master Plan, particularly with regard to surrounding land uses and transportation planning efforts. The NJMC's focus would be planning for compatible uses around the Sports Complex. Current plans for the overall redevelopment of the Sports Complex site presently include three components:

- Xanadu. The \$1.3 billion plan for Xanadu consists of a 4.8 million-square-foot family entertainment complex, office, and retail project on a 104-acre site near Continental Airlines Arena. A partial list of attractions includes an indoor snow dome, a resort-style spa, a skate park, and a New Jersey Music Hall of Fame. Construction is scheduled to begin in the spring of 2004. The entertainment phase of the project could open as early as 2006.
- Renovations at Continental Airlines Arena. A \$75 million to \$100 million renovation plan proposed for the arena would increase seating at the arena and provide a connector with Xanadu.
- Mass transit improvements. A \$400 million financial plan is being developed for mass transit improvements, including a 2.5-mile rail loop that would circle the sports complex and connect with Secaucus Junction and the Pascack Valley, Main, and Bergen rail lines.

Employment Centers

Employment centers contain the workplaces for a relatively large number of the District's employment population. The centers may include a mix of land uses such as office, warehouse-distribution, and industrial facilities. Permitted uses also include business incubator parks for manufacturing start-up and buildings with multiple manufacturing and "value-added" tenants.

The Land Use Plan calls for centers with a concentration of industrial and warehouse distribution businesses. Business and professional services and transportation facilities are also encouraged. Employment Centers could evolve into the next phase of distribution and light industrial facilities. The plan encourages the continuation of office development at the locations where it currently exists.

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Villages: Little Ferry, Lyndhurst, Moonachie, Secaucus, and Teterboro

Although there is not an extensive amount of residential development in the Meadowlands District, residential areas do exist and need to be addressed in the Land Use Plan. As described in Chapter 4, Housing, the most extensive residential areas in the District are located in the Town of Secaucus. Other areas of residential use are located in Little Ferry, Moonachie, Teterboro, Lyndhurst, and Jersey City. The dominant residential development in these areas consists of single and two family houses on small lots. The largest multi-family residential development in the District is Harmon Cove in Secaucus, which consists of townhouses and several high rise buildings.

The Land Use Plan generally seeks to protect and maintain the existing one and two family residential areas. The Plan's "Village" designation will promote the continuation of this development scale and ensure that the Village areas are compatible with adjacent residential development outside the District. Low density residential development will be permitted in single and two-family structures. New development will be pedestrian-friendly and consistent with the character of surrounding neighborhoods. Retail and service establishments will be permitted to accommodate residents.

The Village designation also includes the two mobile home parks located for many decades on Moonachie Avenue in Moonachie. The parks are evolving into manufactured home parks where "single-wide units" are being replaced with new "double-wide" manufactured homes. These areas are active neighborhoods despite their locations between warehouses and Teterboro Airport.

A residential area in Jersey City is a unique areas that require additional study to determine their future viability as residential neighborhoods. The zone plan and regulations should adequately address the issue of the suitability of these areas for residential uses.

Airport

As described in Chapter 6, Circulation, Teterboro Airport is owned and operated by the Port Authority of New York and New Jersey (PANY/NJ) and subject to Federal Aviation Administration and PANY/NJ regulations. The NJMC has limited jurisdiction in regulating development on property owned by the Port Authority. The Airport planning area straddles the municipalities of Teterboro and Moonachie. Uses at the 827-acre airport include paved runways, taxiways, landing strips, and aprons; aircraft storage, service and hanger facilities; lighting, radio and radar facilities; aircraft fueling facilities; and private passenger terminal facilities. The airport has 408 aeronautical acres, 90 acres of aircraft hangers/maintenance/office and 329 acres of undeveloped land. The undeveloped land includes a 140-acre lowland forest, considered wetland. The surrounding land uses include medical research facilities, limited distribution facilities, airport executive office park and limited residential development.

Teterboro is designed as a reliever airport and therefore does not accommodate scheduled carrier operations. The airport imposes a weight restriction that prohibits use by aircraft with operating weights in excess of 100,000 pounds. The Airport concept assumes Teterboro Airport

will continue as a “general aviation reliever” airport along with related uses. Consistent with smart growth principles, uses will value regional considerations of sustainability over isolated actions. This aspiration should be complemented by the surrounding land use. All uses on and around the Airport are subject to height restrictions and established noise controls set by the Federal Aviation Administration.

The wetland on the Airport property will be preserved in its natural state. It is one of the few locations in the Meadowlands area where natural forested areas can be found.

Commercial Corridor

The Commercial Corridor takes advantage of commercial retail opportunities along major transportation corridors. In addition to recognizing existing commercial centers, the Commercial Corridor designation promotes a range of commercial development uses, including community commercial centers, highway commercial development, big box retail, theme retail, commercial recreation facilities and office/hotel development.

The corridor includes the land adjacent to Route 3 in East Rutherford and Secaucus. Mill Creek Mall in Secaucus is a retail area already located in the corridor. The individual commercial uses with highway frontage along Route 3 in Secaucus are part of this district. Also added to this designation is the Sheraton Plaza area in East Rutherford which is in proximity to Interchange 16W of the New Jersey Turnpike. The commercial development of this area may be influenced by the redevelopment of the New Jersey Sports and Exposition property.

Waterfront Development

Waterfront Development areas are located adjacent to the Hackensack River. Since most of the Hackensack River frontage is wetland, there are limited locations where upland areas have opportunities to interface with the river. For those locations, comprehensive design planning will maximize the waterfront opportunities for recreation and access to the water. These activities include pedestrian walkways, restaurants, marinas/boat launches, related commercial activities and, in certain portions, residential development. Any residential development should provide for public access to the waterfront and to pedestrian walkways.

Design standards will require commercial development to be constructed at a scale that will allow the river to play an important visual role in how the buildings are viewed and how the mix of uses are integrated into the water’s edge. Residential development should maintain moderate densities.

These areas are designated as Waterfront Development:

- The land area adjacent to the Hackensack River from Harmon Cove Towers in the south to Paterson Plank Road in the north. This includes much of the existing development along the River including Harmon Cove, Meadowlands Hospital, and commercial uses along the west side of Meadowland Parkway.

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- An area located at the foot of Paterson Plank Road along the Hackensack River in Carlstadt/East Rutherford. This area is not deemed suitable for residential uses.
- A portion of Little Ferry at its northernmost point within the District.

Paterson Plank Road Corridor

The Paterson Plank Road Corridor is a designated redevelopment area in the District. It is situated along Paterson Plank Road between Route 17 and Washington Avenue, adjacent to the Sports Complex. The Corridor also acts as the entrance way to the Gotham Industrial Park in Carlstadt. Paterson Plank Road is a heavily traveled roadway and is used as a bypass between Route 3 and Route 17. It contains two superfund sites, which are in the process of remediation.

This designation provides a combination of commercial and entertainment uses along the frontage of Paterson Plank Road. Office, retail, and hotel uses are planned in a comprehensive manner to coordinate the various commercial uses and provide adequate access and parking. The area is intended to be redeveloped as a significant destination point for business and visitors in conjunction with future development at the Sports Complex site. A transit station may be developed at the Pascack Valley Line along the western portion of the Corridor.

Warehouse Outlet Center

The Warehouse Outlet Center designation acknowledges the outlet area already located in Secaucus. The area has evolved from a warehouse/distribution park into a warehouse area with substantial retail facilities, including a mall entirely dedicated to retail use. It has become a major attraction for shoppers and visitors to the region.

The Land Use Plan encourages the Warehouse Outlet Center to develop into a cohesive, planned, retail-oriented area. The warehouse component, vital to the Meadowland's economy, would remain. Because the two uses are not always compatible from a transportation perspective, requirements should ensure adequate truck movements to warehouses and sufficient parking areas for retail outlet stores.

Logistics/Intermodal/Industrial

Logistics/Intermodal areas are traditionally associated with heavy industry in the Meadowlands. They include heavy industry, public service uses and intermodal rail and truck facilities. Two trends have created an opportunity to restructure the heavy industry use category by defining geographic areas for intermodal and logistic uses:

- The relocation of most heavy industry out of the region is being accompanied by increases in uses related to growth in the Port Newark/Elizabeth area and freight rail business. The rail business has dramatically changed since the sale of Conrail to Norfolk Southern and CSX. The two companies have expanded their intermodal yards and increased the amount of goods imported into the region by rail; they look to improve connections to the ports for

increased freight services. The ports, in response to changing conditions in world trade, are anticipating increased imports. A harbor dredging program by the Army Corps of Engineers is underway to enable larger vessels to utilize the port facilities.

The intermodal designation is derived from the use of multiple transportation modes to get goods from manufacturers to the consumer market. The product flow from ship to rail to truck requires a series of transportation transfers at intermodal facilities. Intermodal uses have a particular reliance on the trucking industry.

- The manufacturing of products from raw materials has evolved into “value-added” and light assembly facilities with a heavy reliance on trucking services to move freight to the local markets from the railheads or from light manufacturing facilities. This process is called “logistics,” because it involves the combination of transportation, assembly, processing and delivery of goods to the market.

The Land Use Plan designates these locations for Logistics/Intermodal/Industrial:

- A portion of the Town of Kearny south of Kearny Marsh from the Hackensack River to the western border of the District;
- The majority of the in-District portion of Jersey City and adjacent parcels in North Bergen;
- A section of Ridgefield including Little Ferry Yard and an auto terminal;
- The lower portion of Little Ferry adjacent to the Hackensack River;
- An area of North Bergen located between Westside Avenue and the Northern Branch Rail Line; and
- A section of Lyndhurst along the westerly border of the District.

A comprehensive study of the need for intermodal use and “value-added” facilities should be undertaken to refine the intermodal industry’s needs. An in-depth analysis of the economic conditions and trends regarding this evolving industry will enable appropriate planning and land use requirements for its future growth in the Meadowlands.

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